



NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.  
No notice can be taken of anonymous communications. Whatever is intended for insertion must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer, so necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee, so also, that it is not intended for insertion. Correspondents are respectfully requested to write on one side of the paper only.

## The Daily Press

Hongkong, October 27th, 1875.

In our remarks yesterday, on the Court of Enquiry respecting the loss of the *Hector*, we quoted section 242 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, which gives power to the Board of Trade alone to suspend or cancel a certificate, but hurriedly overlooked the fact that section 23 of the Merchant Shipping Act of July, 1852, transfers the power to cancel or suspend certificates from the Board of Trade to the Court holding the inquiry—the former reserving to themselves the power to re-issue and return any certificate which had been cancelled or suspended, or shorten the time for which it is suspended. It will thus be seen that the Board do not pretend to increase the severity of a sentence, but merely to interfere when they think the punishment too stringent. There is one other point in the constitution of the Court which investigated the loss of the *Hector*, to which attention has not been already drawn. It is a point of such importance that it is almost inconceivable how any Senior Naval Officer at a port could have been led into composing a court which had done nothing more nor less than rendered the sentence upon the Master of the *Hector* an illegal one. Section 261 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, states that every Naval Court shall consist of not more than five and not less than three members, of whom, if possible, one shall be an officer in the Naval Service of Her Majesty, one a consul officer, and one a master of a British merchant ship; and the rest shall be either officers in the Naval Service of Her Majesty, masters of British merchant ships, or British merchants. Now Captain Cooper, one of the Chinese gunboats, was present at and took part in the investigation. Why an officer in charge of a foreign vessel was imported into a Court to inquire into the loss of a British ship it is difficult to say. The fact that such was done has had one effect, and it is that of annulling all the Court's proceedings. If Captain Robinson applies to the Board of Trade for the return of his certificate, complaining of the illegality of the constitution of the Court which condemned him, he will no doubt get it back again!

There is now no possible doubt that the report which was first published in the *Hector* News about a boat's crew belonging to E.B.M.'s ship *Sylvia* being chased by the Chinese is perfectly true. A party of officers and men, while engaged in rowing some distance from the shore, were suddenly attacked by a number of Coreans, who shot at them with bows and arrows. The boat's crew had, it is stated, to row for no less a distance than eighty miles, with the enemy, in hot pursuit. There are at present no further particulars to hand to show that an act of wanton aggression has been committed by those self-styled savages. It is very evident that their hostility is not confined to the Japanese; their hand is against every man. It is equally clear that, sooner or later, they will have to be taught that such outrages cannot be committed with impunity upon peaceful and unoffending vessels, even in the vicinity of their coasts. They appear to grow more and more jealous of the approach of foreigners, probably because the danger of their being compelled to throw open the country seems to wax nearer and more apparent. But their present defiant attitude and aggressive spirit betray the folly of their rulers. It is most calculated to provoke that interference with their cherished solitude they so greatly dread. The evil they would keep at arm's length is, by their own stupid action, likely soon to come upon them. So long as they were content to remain quiet there was comparatively little to fear from outside nations. Shut up in their mountainous peninsulas they might well have remained, the world ignorant, by the world ignored. But when they venture to attempt to drive away foreign ships from the seas in their vicinity, they must expect to become the objects of foreign attention—and that not of an altogether favourable kind. They seem, unwittingly it is true, bent upon precipitating what they so ardently desire to avert. It is perhaps their utter ignorance of the usages and customs of other nations, that leads them into their impolite displays of vindictive hostility. But their ignorance cannot be allowed as a plea in arrest of satisfaction for these offences. While despising such paltry exhibitions of pure rage and fright—for the attack on the *Sylvia*'s boat was probably more the outcome of fear than anger else—no nation can afford to entirely pass over such an outrage.

It is indeed time that Corea was made to feel that she has some duties in connection with other powers. It is most inadvisable that any nation should be compelled to keep up such an isolated position as that of Corea. It may be argued that if she chooses to hold no communication with the outer world, foreigners have no right to compel her to do so. Perhaps not, so long as she does not interfere in any way with other people. But when it is found that she will not allow a foreign ship to cruise in the seas that wash her coasts without firing upon her, it becomes a question whether it is not better, in the interests of foreign nations generally, to insist at least upon the inhabitants of the coast being brought under proper control, and compelled to treat foreigners with civility when they chance to come into contact with them. In the event of Japan declaring war against Corea, Great Britain and other Powers should give the former their moral support, and secure the non-interference of China in the struggle. War is at all times to be deprecated, but there is reason to believe that if carried on under the eyes of foreign powers, the Japanese would prosecute it with a greater regard for humanity than if left to carry it on in their way. At the same time it is useless to disguise the fact that Japan can gain little material advantage by going to war with Corea. It would be an arduous task to subdue the

country, which by its conformation gives the inhabitants plenty of rocky retreat and fastness. When conquered, too, the country would scarcely prove worth the cost and trouble attending its acquisition. It is not believed to be particularly rich in minerals, and the soil is known to be poor. But though as a revenue-producing territory Corea may not be worth the cost attending its annexation, there are other reasons that may operate strongly in inducing the Japanese Government to attempt its subjugation. It has old claims to suzerainty over the country, and is tired of calmly receiving slaps in the face from such a petty kingdom. It must also be remembered that there is every prospect of Corea one day losing its independence, and, in the event of being absorbed by China or Russia, it would become a formidable menace to Japan. It cannot be doubted that considerations of this sort will duly weigh with the Mikado's Government, and may turn the scale. Nor would any great outrage on justice be perpetrated by the forcible annexation of Corea by the Japanese. The Coreans would then be emancipated from the dense ignorance and gross prejudices which now enthrall them, and become possessed of many privileges to which they are at present strangers. They would be much benefited if, even they were only compelled to throw open their ports and hold commercial intercourse with foreign nations. The advantage would, however, probably be almost entirely on one side, for Corean exports would necessarily be few in number and of little value. The people, moreover, are far from rich, and not likely to become very large importers of European produce. It is doubtful on the whole, whether any attempt to break down Corean exclusiveness would repay the trouble expended, much more the cost of protracted war. All things considered, we are still of opinion that it would, for the present, at all events, be an unwise enterprise to proceed with the *Iron Duke* to Corea.

Mr. Breton admitted that the defendant would be no need to call any witness. He submitted, however, on the same ground, that plaintiff must be summoned. If there was any tilt at all it was against the person who took the note.

His Lordship could not agree with Mr. Breton, and if defendant would not apologize to him, he said it was a cause he never thought to have been brought before the Court.

His Lordship said if plaintiff was a respectable man, and defendant had written in such a way, the former had a perfect right to come into Court and clear his character. It was a case for an apology.

Mr. Breton said the note had been delivered to him in his hand, and there was no

signature on it.

His Lordship said such a letter ought not to have been written.

Mr. Breton had the same opinion.

His Lordship said that defendant ought not to be summoned to say now that he had done wrong. That was the proudest thing any man could say.

Mr. Breton, after conversing with his client, said he was instructed to say that defendant regretted that in an angry moment he had opened the letter. The statement of the man that was true, but it might be different as regarded the plaintiff.

Mr. Holmes said that plaintiff had received the letter, but as his sight was bad he had asked Williams, who was standing by, to read it for him.

Mr. Breton again reminded His Lordship of the maxim, *de minimis non curat lex*.

His Lordship replied that that Court was open to any case of this kind where a man's character had suffered in the least. Defendant ought to be ashamed of what he had done; and he ought never to have written the letter under any circumstances.

There was some further conversation.

Mr. Stretton and defendant withdrew, the defendant apologised in open Court for having sent it, and submitted to nominal damages.

Mr. Holmes, for plaintiff accepted this, and applied for costs.

His Lordship refused to give costs on either side.

CLAIM FOR CARRIAGE REPAIRS.

OREGON AT AYU. HOWE, \$25.—This was a claim for work done to defendant's carriage.

Defendant did not appear, but sent a boy to say he was sick.

His Lordship said he was always glad to adjourn cases to suit parties if proper representations were made to him, but to send anyone to say he was sick.

Plaintiff then spoke to the registrar, and adjourned the case.

His Lordship gave judgment for plaintiff, but as he had found no enquiry that defendant was in bed when the summons was served, he would stay execution till Tuesday next.

## MEMORIAL AND DECREE ON FOREIGN PASSPORTS IN CHINA.

Memorial on Foreign Passports, published in the Manuscript Edition of the *Peiping Gazette*, 10th October.

Lord Maury's servants Yi-Sia and others the Prince of Kung and his colleagues of the Imperial Guard, and upon their services presents a memorial to the Emperor, and the Emperor has been pleased to grant a perfect exposition of a provision in the treaties with foreign States, they pray Your Majesty to issue a Decree directing the provincial governments to take cognizance thereof, that it may be clearly adhered to, and departure from it avoided.

They would humbly represent, with reference to the Chinese, that foreign travellers, in the interior, that by their long journeys travelling, they are exposed to many dangers, and that the treatise of the several treaty-powers, a passport, to be applied for which is sealed by a Chinese authority, persons holding passports to produce them for inspection, as occasion may demand when they are travelling, and inspection made, they are to be allowed to proceed on their journey, and must not be hindered or detained by any of the Chinese.

His Lordship said if plaintiff was a respectable man, and defendant had written in such a way, the former had a perfect right to come into Court and clear his character. It was a case for an apology.

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POLICE IN ENGLAND.

25th October.

BEFORE JAMES RUSSELL, Esq.

STEALING A PIPE.

LEONARD COOPER, a prisoner, charged a rick-ponder, named Chan Achun, with stealing her brass smoking pipe.

The prisoner denied the charge, but was sent to four months' hard labour.

YOUNG THIEF.

A boy 12 years of age, named Tam Asing, was found in a boat, 120 yards from the shore, with a lamp and a pipe, and a small quantity of opium. He was sent to 10 months' imprisonment and to be beaten 10 strokes with a rattan.

UNLAWFUL ROBBERY.

WONG AKU, a coolie, was leaving the Hung-han Docks yesterday by the watchman with a long knife. He examined it and found it pointed.

He was convicted of its unlawful possession, and sent to 20 days' hard labour.

YOUNG THIEF.

FANG SAI SING and FANG ASING, two boatmen, were charged with robbing a boat from Yung-wei Wang, a steamer, at Yung-wei, on the 24th.

The first prisoner was convicted on the evidence given, and sent to 21 days' imprisonment; the second was discharged.

DOGS AGAIN.

HAU LIN, a native opio, was charged with the killing of a dog, and was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment.

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